CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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LETTER DATED 17 FEBRUARY 1993 FROM THE DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF CANADA ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT TRANSMITTING THE VIEWS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA ON THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS ENTITLED "NEW DIMENSIONS OF ARMS REGULATION AND DISARMAMENT IN THE POST-COLD-WAR ERA"

I have the honour to transmit the text that was forwarded to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, giving the views of the Government of Canada on his report entitled "New dimensions of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era".

I would be grateful if the necessary arrangements could be made for its distribution to all member and participating non-member State delegations, under cover of a CD number.

(Signed): A.W.J. Robertson
Minister and Deputy Permanent
Representative to the
Conference on Disarmament

CANADIAN VIEWS ON THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

"NEW DIMENSIONS OF ARMS REGULATION AND
DISARMAMENT IN THE POST-COLD-WAR ERA"

Canada considers the Secretary-General's report to be a useful complement to "An agenda for peace". It offers the prospect of real solutions to the problems which face the United Nations in the peace and security field. This is especially true as the United Nations moves away from the cold war rhetoric and begins to define a course of action to enable the international community to respond more effectively to the new challenge of promoting a system of global cooperative security.

The evolution of geopolitical forces in the last four years has created new and more complex security challenges. The discipline of the cold war has dissipated without being replaced, with the result that regional conflicts have been able to flourish unchecked. Consequently, there is an urgent requirement for the United Nations to adopt new procedures and new approaches to the security problems facing the world. This challenge was recognized in the "Agenda for peace". The task in addressing arms control in the post-cold-war era is to move away from the processes, groupings and mechanisms of the cold war and adopt new agendas and procedures designed to address today's and tomorrow's problems.

In this context, the conclusion of the chemical weapons Convention brings to the forefront three immediate challenges: (i) the need to confirm and strengthen through universal adherence and enhancing verification mechanisms as appropriate, existing global instruments (e.g. NPT, BTWC and the CWC itself); (ii) to develop further and harmonize where possible export controls of sensitive technologies; and (iii) to develop and apply regional arms control regimes, linking global and specific regional measures, as required (e.g. the Middle East peace process). For each of these, but particularly the latter, the direct essential linkage between security concerns and arms control measures will have to be emphasized. Confidence-building steps will be increasingly important.

Canada's priorities are effectively established: (i) Horizontal and vertical non-proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction and of missile systems for their delivery. This includes the goal of a comprehensive nuclear test ban. (ii) Effective action to prevent the excessive build-up of conventional arms inventories. (During the 1991 United Nations General Assembly 46th session debate on the arms Register we made it clear that our goal was not just transparency, but consultations among States in order to encourage more self-restraint in transfers and in order to help build broader consensus on means of avoiding excessive build-ups. Canada views the register as a means and not an end in itself.) (iii) Development and implementation of confidence-building measures - including appropriate verification mechanisms - for global and regional situations as required.

Despite positive developments in recent years, we recognize that the proliferation of the technology and equipment capable of making weapons of mass destruction continues to be a source of instability and, in the words of the historic Security Council summit Declaration of 31 January 1992 - a threat

to international peace and security. We encourage all countries to sign the chemical weapons Convention and to sign the nuclear non-proliferation Treaty. In the words of the Secretary-General, the NPT must be extended indefinitely and unconditionally.

We wholeheartedly agree with the Secretary-General's observation that transparency in armaments and other confidence-building measures are an important trend to encourage and that the United Nations arms Register is an important practical step. We particularly welcome his assurance that the United Nations will do all it can to make the Register a success, including we assume ensuring that sufficient resources are devoted to it. For our part, Canada has consistently and actively supported the concept of transparency in armaments. We intend to work actively to ensure that as many States as possible comply fully with the arms Register - providing both data and information - by the due date of 30 April 1993.

Canada is also encouraged to see a growing interest among nations in developing regional approaches to arms control and disarmament. Canada's view is that regional approaches to disarmament can make valuable contributions to our collective pursuit of the broader objectives of disarmament and international security. For example, in Vienna, negotiations on confidence- and security-building measures and European conventional armed forces within the framework of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe have demonstrated the benefits that such a regional approach can offer to all participating States. In the Middle East as well, as part of the peace process, discussions are taking place on arms control. Other regional players are also taking a more concerted, active approach to regional security including within ASEAN and OAS.

Turning specifically to the Secretary-General's report, Canada supports the central thesis that three key themes - integration, globalization and revitalization - are the foundation stones of an intensified international effort to enhance the effectiveness of arms control and disarmament. In particular we support the assertion that the process of arms limitation and disarmament is the responsibility of every State. Likewise we agree with the Secretary-General that disarmament continues to be centrally relevant to international peace and security.

The global security environment has been changing rapidly since the end of the cold war. Opportunities and challenges abound as the international order is restructured. We agree in principle with the concept that disarmament and inspection procedures play an important part in the field of peace enforcement and arms limitation. We would add that verification of disarmament and arms limitation agreements can also facilitate United Nations activities with respect to preventative diplomacy, peacemaking, peace-keeping and post-conflict peace-building. It is our view that the First Committee, UNDC and expert groups should be dealing with the role of the United Nations in verification. Verification may provide an important linkage among many of these previously separate concepts - a new integrative dimension. At the very least, the United Nations must be active in exploring new ideas in these areas. This issue should not only continue to engage the Security Council but also the broader United Nations membership.

Canada was interested in the Secretary-General's reference to an increased role for the Security Council in disarmament matters and, in particular, in the enforcement of non-proliferation. Given the range of views that currently exists among Member States on this proposal, Canada views the resumed session of the First Committee as an important opportunity for further dialogue thereon.

In Canada's view, the Office of Disarmament Affairs should be the focal point of a revitalized United Nations role in multilateral arms control and disarmament. Therefore, we particularly welcome the commitment, given by former Under-Secretary-General Petrovsky, to strengthening the ODA so that it can indeed function as such a focal point. We believe the United Nations has an important role to play in promoting informal mechanisms for security dialogue - particularly in regions or sub-regions where institutional frameworks for such discussions are not yet fully developed. In this manner, the ODA can help ensure that regional processes and mechanisms serve to reinforce and complement global norms. Canada commends these ongoing activities of the ODA.

Clearly many other Member States feel the same way as is evidenced by the support given to the three United Nations Regional Offices - and to other related activities of the ODA - at the Tenth United Nations Pledging Conference for the World Disarmament Campaign. Participating Member States will recall that this year a trend of the past few years was dramatically reversed with an increase of over 50 per cent from the previous year's total. In this regard, however, we note that a greater effort must be made to address the disparity in pledges from one region to another.

The Secretary-General's proposal to examine the role of private international arms dealers and their connection to the burgeoning problem of international arms transfers is noted with interest. It is disturbing to observe that such transfers are being made at the cost of human, social and economic development. The proposal to establish a task force to provide Member States with advice on military conversion programmes is also to be commended. On the other hand we note that regional forums are also conducting similar studies; such duplication of effort should be avoided if possible.

We strongly agree with the Secretary-General that the time is ripe for a thorough reassessment by Member States of the United Nations disarmament machinery in order to ensure that it is able to meet new realities. A useful starting point, in our view, is to recall the main functions of each of the three multilateral ACD bodies - the First Committee, the United Nations Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament - then to identify problems in the effective carrying out of these roles and finally to seek to identify practical means of responding to these problems.

A. <u>The First Committee</u>

In Canada's view, the role of the First Committee - a global deliberative body - is to identify priorities on the multilateral ACD agenda and to build support and momentum as an essential first step in the broader process of international norm-building as it relates to arms control and disarmament. This process not only contributes to the identification and promotion of broad

principles but increasingly - as the arms Register so graphically demonstrates - focuses on concrete steps which the international community can take towards the achievement of these broad goals or norms.

The First Committee continues to provide a useful framework for the United Nations membership to elaborate and clarify positions on a variety of ACD issues. Rationalization of the First Committee's work is progressing, e.g. combining the debate on disarmament and international security items. We should now take the logical next step of combining action on these two sets of items. Only then will we have fully integrated our consideration of means - arms control and disarmament measures - with our desired end - the maintenance of international peace and security.

We need to accelerate the task of rationalization, of setting concrete and practical priorities and of ensuring fewer resolutions, and more genuine dialogue. Now that East/West polarization is over, there is the possibility for greater functional cooperation on specific issues among delegations from differing groups and perspectives. An example of this in the First Committee context is the merger of the Mexican and Western Core Group CTBT resolutions.

The length of the plenary debate in First Committee could be shortened, either through the elimination of oral statements or their limitation to a strict time limit of 10 minutes maximum. Additionally, the circulation of executive summaries along with printed texts could be encouraged. Ideally, Member States should strive to distribute their text at the very outset of the time allotted for plenary debate, thereby ensuring that the time normally used for the reading of texts could be devoted to more informal consultations among delegations. With respect to consideration of individual items, including the introduction of resolutions, a better overall system of grouping items might facilitate a more genuine interchange on related issues.

B. United Nations Disarmament Commission - UNDC

The UNDC is the second global deliberative body. Its primary role is to allow focused discussion of a limited agenda without the pressure of voting on resolutions. Its function encompasses conceptual discussion, consensus-building with respect to arms control and international security-related issues (e.g. transfer of technology), as well as the identification of global and regional measures for negotiations elsewhere. The UNDC also prepares the groundwork for the CD through the development of principles as well as providing, at least potentially, a degree of focus for the CD agenda.

We believe that a mechanism is required to provide a greater degree of linkage between the UNDC and the CD in order for UNDC deliberations to become more relevant and results oriented. Closer cooperation and some mechanism for linkage or dialogue is therefore required in the short term, if these two bodies are to remain relevant in the rapidly changing ACD environment. In the longer term, when membership of the two bodies is more similar, the merging of the two may be feasible especially if cost factors can be overcome. Greater linkage between the UNDC and the CD will, however, be problematic as long as membership of the CD remains restricted and UNDC membership universal.

Within the United Nations, the reform process in the UNDC is most advanced. For example, we are well on the way to achieving a rolling three-item agenda which, on the one hand, ensures a degree of predictability while, on the other, allows us to incorporate contemporary issues in a timely manner.

Beyond this, the UNDC is at the stage where it has too much time to engage in general debate but - without more advance preparation by delegations - too little time for in-depth dialogue on complex issues in which there exist some rather fundamental differences of view. In order for the UNDC to live up to its full potential, every effort must be made to circulate focused working papers - preferably reflecting joint efforts of a number of countries spanning differences of view - in advance of the session so delegations come prepared for in-depth dialogue.

C. Conference on Disarmament - CD

The primary role of the Conference on Disarmament is of course to negotiate global arms control and disarmament instruments. The CD can also usefully conduct pre-negotiation discussions, as it currently does on a nuclear test ban and outer space. Conclusion of the CWC has, however, temporarily exhausted a meaningful agenda for that body. Negotiation in the CD of a CTBT to eliminate all nuclear testing in all environments for all time remains a priority objective. There should be strong verification provisions building on the work of the Group of Seismic Experts to establish global monitoring mechanisms.

CD procedures and membership are closely linked but subsidiary to its substantive negotiating agenda. We have recognized for some time that the current CD membership, and possibly the CD itself, no longer reflects the changing international security environment. We are in favour of broadening CD membership to admit those States which have formally applied.

We also hope that the CD can energize movement on the issue of transparency in armaments. We hope that the current session of the CD will provide productive debate on this issue as well as with respect to radiological weapons and outer space.

The Secretary-General suggested in his report to have the CD take on the role of a permanent review and supervisory body for some existing multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements. Canada has reservations about the notion of having the CD take on such a role. The focus of the CD should not be diverted away from being the sole body in the United Nations with the authority to negotiate global arms control agreements.

Conclusion

The three multilateral ACD bodies have distinct, yet complementary and interrelated functions. In Canada's view, the resumed session therefore offers a unique opportunity to: (1) reaffirm the distinctive roles of each of the three multilateral ACD bodies and of the Office of Disarmament Affairs as the "focal point" for multilateral ACD activity; (2) provide additional

impetus to the ongoing work of rationalization of the three ACD bodies; and (3) provide an opportunity for focused consideration of practical ways to enhance the effective interaction of these three bodies.

The report on a "New dimension of arms regulation and disarmament in the post-cold-war era", as with the "Agenda for peace", is a thought-provoking document. We agree with the assertion that there is a parallel between conflict resolution and disarmament; the process of conflict resolution must be supported by concrete arms control and disarmament measures.

Beyond this, is the need to liberate the term "arms control and disarmament" from its cold war preoccupation with numbers of weapons. As important as this is, arms control and disarmament is now seen to both embrace and constitute a part of a far broader process of confidence building, of transparency, of accountability, of verification and, most importantly, of promoting less reliance on weapons and more reliance on genuinely cooperative mechanisms for creating and enhancing international peace and security. The Secretary-General's personal commitment to these issues is most welcome.